

LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claims 1 through 52. (Canceled).

53. (New) An article of footwear, comprising:

a sole having a toe part, a ball part extending from the toe part, and an instep-heel part extending from the ball part, wherein:

the toe part is made of a substantially inflexible material and includes a plurality of spikes extending from a bottom surface thereof,

the ball part is made of a flexible material, and

the instep-heel part is made of a substantially inflexible material, wherein the instep-heel part includes a heel portion including a first heel side support, a second heel side support, and an end heel support at a rear heel location, wherein a first opening is defined through the heel portion by the first heel side support and the end heel support and a second opening is defined through the heel portion by the second heel side support and the end heel support; and

an upper instep member engaged with the instep-heel part of the sole by an adjustable connection, wherein the upper instep member is located such that a foot-receiving opening for the article of footwear is defined between the upper instep member and the heel portion of the instep-heel part, and wherein the upper instep member does not extend over the ball part or the toe part of the sole such that a top surface of the sole remains exposed at the ball part and the toe part.

54. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 53, wherein a bottom surface of the instep-heel part includes an opening defined therethrough, wherein the opening in the bottom surface extends from the heel portion to an instep portion of the instep-heel part.

55. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 53, wherein the toe part is made of a composite material of carbon fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

56. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 55, wherein the instep-heel part is made of the composite material of carbon fiber in the thermoplastic resin.

57. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 56, wherein the ball part is made of a composite material of aramid fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

58. (New) The article of footwear of claim 53, wherein the upper instep member is engaged with the instep part by an adjustable tie.

59. (New) The article of footwear of claim 53, wherein the article of footwear is an athletic shoe.

60. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 53, wherein the toe part has an upward curve in a direction from the ball part toward a front end of the toe part.

61. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 53, wherein the adjustable connection includes at least one member selected from the group consisting of: a cable tie, a lace, a hook-and-loop type fastener, and a buckle and strap assembly.

62. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 53, wherein the instep-heel part includes a first instep side support at a first side of the article of footwear and a second instep side support at a second side of the article of footwear, and wherein the upper instep member is engaged with the first instep side support and the second instep side support.

63. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 62, wherein the upper instep member is made from sections of a first material and a second material arranged in an alternating manner, wherein the first material is a flexible material and the second material is a substantially inflexible material.

64. (New) An article of footwear, consisting essentially of:
a sole having a toe part, a ball part extending from the toe part, and an instep-heel part extending from the ball part, wherein:

the toe part includes a plurality of spikes extending from a bottom surface thereof, and

the instep-heel part includes a heel portion having a first heel side support, a second heel side support, and an end heel support at a rear heel location, wherein a first opening is defined through the heel portion by the first heel side support and the end heel support and a second opening is defined through the heel portion by the second heel side support and the end heel support; and

an upper instep member engaged with the instep-heel part of the sole by an adjustable connection, wherein the upper instep member is located such that a foot-receiving opening for

the article of footwear is defined between the upper instep member and the heel portion of the instep-heel part, and wherein the upper instep member does not extend over the ball part or the toe part of the sole.

65. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 64, wherein a bottom surface of the instep-heel part includes an opening defined therethrough, wherein the opening in the bottom surface extends from the heel portion to an instep portion of the instep-heel part.

66. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 64, wherein the toe part is made of a composite material of carbon fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

67. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 66, wherein the instep-heel part is made of the composite material of carbon fiber in the thermoplastic resin.

68. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 67, wherein the ball part is made of a composite material of aramid fiber in a thermoplastic resin.

69. (New) The article of footwear of claim 64, wherein the upper instep member is engaged with the instep part by an adjustable tie.

70. (New) The article of footwear of claim 64, wherein the article of footwear is an athletic shoe.

71. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 64, wherein the toe part has an upward curve in a direction from the ball part toward a front end of the toe part.

72. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 64, wherein the adjustable connection includes at least one member selected from the group consisting of: a cable tie, a lace, a hook-and-loop type fastener, and a buckle and strap assembly.

73. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 64, wherein the instep-heel part includes a first instep side support at a first side of the article of footwear and a second instep side support at a second side of the article of footwear.

74. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 73, wherein a first end of the upper instep member extends directly from the first instep side support and a second end of the upper instep member engages the second instep side support by the adjustable connection.

75. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 74, wherein the upper instep member is made from sections of a first material and a second material arranged in an alternating manner, wherein the first material is a flexible material and the second material is a substantially inflexible material.

76. (New) The article of footwear according to claim 64, wherein the sole is made from plural sections of a first material and plural sections of a second material arranged in an alternating manner, wherein the first material is a flexible material and the second material is a substantially inflexible material.